(b) the measures to mitigate the problems of handloom weavers;

(c) whether Government has taken any measure *i.e.* loan waiver for handloom sector;

(d) whether Government proposes to export handloom products to neighbouring countries;

(e) whether Government has taken steps to increase the levy on handloom imports; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms in the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India has been liberally funding the State Governments for implementing various schemes for handloom weavers to address the felt needs of the handloom weavers to enhance their production, productivity and enhance the income and social economic status of the weavers by providing skill up-gradation, infrastructure and input supply support to them. During the 11th Five Year Plan, the Office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms has been implementing 5 Schemes *viz.* (1) Integrated Handlooms Development Scheme. (2) Handlooms Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme which consists of Health Insurance Scheme and Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojna, (3) Mill Gate Price Scheme, (4) Marketing and Export Promotion Scheme, and (5) Diversified Handloom Development Scheme. During the last three years Government of India has released fund to the tune of Rs. 52.08 crore to State Government of Andhra Pradesh under various Plan and Non Plan Schemes of Office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms.

For the development of powerloom sector, the Government has taken a number of initiatives to improve the plight of powerloom weavers *viz.* modernization/up-gradation of powerloom scheme, technology up-gradation scheme. 50% power tariff concession, Health Insurance Scheme to powerloom weavers, training to powerloom weavers through Powerloom Weavers Service Centres, Group Insurance Scheme to powerloom weavers through Life Insurance Corporation of India, Netha Cheyutha Trust, providing pension to weavers etc.

(c) The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has recently announced waiver of all loans of Primary handloom weavers cooperative societies in the State.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

High input costs hampering textile production

1073. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Textile Industry has reduced its production by 25 per cent as they are unable to meet the high input costs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether efforts have been made for cutting the cost of cotton by increasing its yield and enhancing the quality to bring it to the international standards; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir, There is a marginal decline in the production of textile items due to various external and internal factors including high input costs.

(c) and (d) The Government has taken following steps to increase the yield and to enhance the quality of cotton:-

(i) The Government had launched Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC) in February 2000 to increase the production, productivity and quality of cotton fibre in a mission mode. The Mission has achieved success in reducing the contamination and enhancing the quality to the international standard through the upgradation of cotton market yards and modernization of ginning and pressing factories.

(ii) Since 2003-04, the Government had commercially released Bacillus Thuringiensis (Bt.) cotton, which is pest resistant, to improve the cotton yield and quality. This new application of technologies *i.e.* biotechnology has resulted in more cotton produced from lands already in production, more efficient use of water resources and less use of farm chemicals.

Proposal of Chhattisgarh regarding handicrafts

†1074. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state the details of action taken on the proposal sent for Chhattisgarh in 2007 and earlier for one-time rebate (10 per cent), marketing incentive and frugality fund plan (compensation) for handicrafts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): So far as, proposal for one time rebate (10%) and frugality fund plan (compensation) for Handicrafts is concerned, the same does not fall under the purview in any of the schemes implemented for development and promotion of handicrafts sector. However, for "marketing incentive" programmes implemented through various organizations, following funds have been released in the State of Chhattisgarh during the last three years and current year *i.e.* 2008-09 (upto November):

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.